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People arriving at the stadium, in Johannesburg, in South Africa, for the memorial service for Nelson Mandela

'THE MAN WHO CHANGED THE WORLD'

On 10th December tens of thousands of people went to a large football stadium near Johannesburg, in South Africa. Leaders and former leaders of nearly 100 countries were among them. All had come to take part in a national memorial service for Nelson Mandela.

Mandela died at his home, in Johannesburg, on 5th December. South Africa's former and first black president was 95 years old. He had been ill for some time.

Within a few hours Jacob Zuma, South Africa's current president, spoke on live television. He told his fellow South Africans that their former leader was dead. The news quickly travelled all around the world. In many countries television and radio programmes were interrupted. Special news bulletins about the death of Mandela were broadcast.

During and after the time that Mandela was South Africa's president he visited

many countries. Everybody welcomed him. Many said he was an 'amazing man'. Others often declared that Mandela 'changed the world'. Hundreds of streets and buildings in Europe, Africa, Asia, and North and South America have been named after him.

Mandela went from 'prison to president'. He was greatly admired for his courage and beliefs. To many he was an icon of freedom and an example of the power of forgiveness. Yet Mandela will probably best be remembered for the ending of apartheid in South Africa and the reconciliation between black and white people.

Mandela was born in 1918. He was a member of the Xhosa tribe, or clan. In later years, as a mark of respect, many people called him Madiba. This was his Xhosa clan name. His real name was Rolihlahla Mandela. In the Xhosa language, Rolihlahla can mean 'troublemaker'.

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When Mandela was born South Africa was a British colony. He went to the local church school. Then, foreign teachers would give students British names. They found these easier to say. Mandela's teacher called him Nelson. When he was older Mandela went to university. He decided to train to become a lawyer. In his youth Mandela liked boxing and long distance running.



Nelson Mandela

Eight years before Mandela was born the British government had decided to let the Afrikaners run South Africa. Many Afrikaners are descended from settlers. These people moved to South Africa from the Netherlands and what is now Germany around 300 years ago.

In 1913 the new South African government passed a land ownership law. The Afrikaners were only a small part of the population. Yet the new law meant they owned about 80% of all the land.

In 1948 the governing National Party introduced apartheid. This was a system that separated white and black people. Apartheid in the Afrikaans language means 'apartness'.

Under apartheid most black South Africans were not allowed to live and work in areas set aside for white people. They could only do so if they had been given a special pass. A black person found in a 'whites only' area without a pass would be arrested. Black people could not go

to certain hospitals and schools, as these were only for 'whites'. Apartheid also meant that black people couldn't vote in elections.

The African National Congress (ANC) was set up in 1912. At first it was called the South African Native National Congress. The organisation changed its name to the ANC in 1923. The ANC was founded by people who were angry about the unfairness of what was happening in South Africa.

Mandela joined the ANC when he was a young man. In 1960 the government banned the organisation. Around this time South Africa became an independent country. After the ban ANC members began arranging acts of resistance against the authorities. Some, including Mandela, said violence should be used to overthrow the government. Then, he thought violence was necessary. This was because peaceful protests had failed to change the apartheid laws.

Many ANC members were arrested. In 1962 the police caught Mandela. Two years later a court found him guilty of [sabotage](#) and trying to overthrow the government. The judge sentenced him to life imprisonment.

During the 27 years he was in prison Mandela became a symbol of the struggle against apartheid. The governments of many other countries disagreed with the apartheid regime. Most refused to trade with South Africa or talk with its government.

In 1989, F W de Klerk became the country's president. He decided to work with the ANC to end apartheid. The following year Mr de Klerk arranged for Mandela and other ANC prisoners to be released. Mandela and Mr de Klerk then worked together to change the way in which South Africa was governed. In 1993

they were jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. This prize is awarded every year. It is given to a person, people or organisation that is judged to have made the greatest contribution to world peace.

In 1994 the first presidential election in which black people were allowed to vote was held in South Africa. Mandela won easily. In 1999, after his five-year term ended, he decided to retire and not stand for re-election.

After being released from prison Mandela said that any type of protest should be peaceful. He always recommended reconciliation where there are differences between races or political groups. He also criticised people who took part in, or encouraged others to join, violent protests.

National leaders, from all around the world, travelled to South Africa for the memorial service at the football stadium. Perhaps the biggest cheer from the crowd was when Barack Obama, the president of the USA, arrived. President Zuma and other members of the ANC made speeches. Mr Obama and Ban-Ki moon, the leader, or secretary-general, of the United Nations (UN) also spoke. Mr Obama said that 'it took a man like Mandela to liberate not just the prisoner, but the jailer as well' and that Mandela had 'a life like no other'.

The following day Mandela's body was taken through the streets of Pretoria, one of South Africa's main cities. Crowds sang and cheered as his coffin, covered by a South African flag, was driven past. The coffin was taken to the Union Buildings. There thousands of people queued to walk past it. The Union Buildings were where Mandela took the oath to become president nearly 20 years ago. Madiba will be buried near his home village, in the south eastern part of the country, on 15th December. ■

LOOTING IN ARGENTINA

Serious looting has broken out in Argentina. In 19 out of the country's 23 provinces local police officers have been on strike. Looting is when crowds of people break into stores. They then take things without paying for them. Looters often damage shops and even set some of them on fire.



Cristina Fernández de Kirchner

The trouble began on 3rd December in Córdoba, Argentina's second largest city. The day before, local police officers decided to go on strike, or refuse to work. They were complaining about their pay. As there were no police in the city some people decided to start looting. After a few days, Córdoba's governor agreed to double police wages.

However, while the police were on strike many stores were broken into. Hundreds of shops were damaged. Two people were killed and over 100 injured. The governor claimed that most of the looters were criminal gangs.

Argentina has many economic problems. Although the government has not admitted it, inflation in the country is thought to be about 30%. This is one of the highest inflation rates in the world. Inflation is when a currency loses value and the cost of things increase. Governments that keep printing more and more banknotes usually cause it. The more banknotes

there are in a country the less they are worth.

The police claimed that they were unable to live on the money they were being paid. They demanded a pay rise that would match the inflation. After the governor of Córdoba agreed to double their pay, police in other provinces went on strike. They too began demanding higher wages. When this happens the new strikes are often called 'copycat' strikes.

In many cities, owners decided to close their shops. Banks also shut and public buses stopped running. Some shop owners used weapons to protect their stores. They threatened to shoot anyone who tried to break in. Crowds, or mobs, took advantage of the police strikes. In some places there were riots. In one part of Buenos Aires, the capital city, a large supermarket was looted and set on fire.

Border police and national police have not been striking. The government sent members of these forces to places where the local police refused to work. Troops have also been sent to some cities.

To stop the strikes other province governors said their police forces would get more money. Then many health workers began joining copycat strikes. They believe that if police pay increases their wages should also rise.

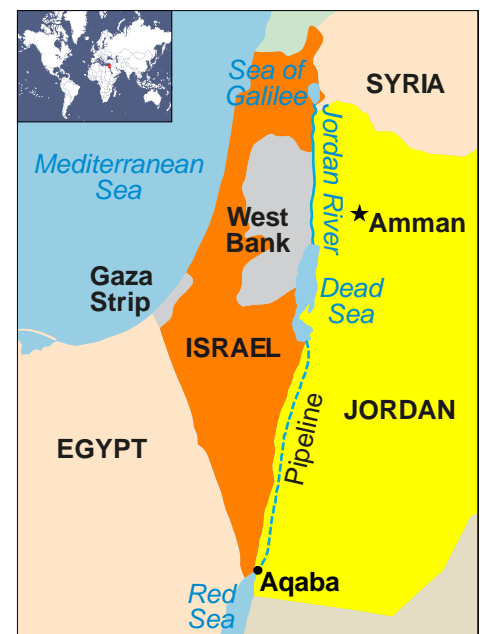
Cristina Fernández de Kirchner is Argentina's president. She was first elected in 2007 and re-elected for another four years in 2011. Since the last election, because of the economic problems, Ms de Kirchner has become an unpopular leader.

Between 1976 and 1983 Argentina was a dictatorship. Military commanders ran the country. Raúl Alfonsín officially became the country's president on 10th December

1983. He was democratically elected. So 10th December this year was the 30th anniversary of the end of Argentina's military dictatorship. A large celebration was held in the centre of Buenos Aires. However, some people said it should have been postponed because of the looting problems. ■

'RED SEA TO DEAD SEA'

Officials from Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority (PA) signed an agreement on 9th December. The signing took place at the headquarters of the World Bank in Washington DC, the capital of the USA.



The World Bank is part of the United Nations (UN), but it operates as a separate organisation. One of its jobs is to help to provide money to pay for large projects in less wealthy countries. As part of the agreement the World Bank will help to pay for a project that will link the Red Sea to the Dead Sea. It will also produce extra drinking water for Israel, Jordan and the PA.

The Dead Sea is a large lake between Jordan, Israel and the West Bank, which is part of the PA. The shore around the lake is about 422 metres (1,384 feet) below the level of the sea. This shoreline is the lowest land on the Earth. The Dead Sea is 377 metres (1,237 feet) deep.

The Dead Sea is also one of the world's saltiest areas of water. It's so salty that when people bathe in it they float much higher in the water than in a swimming pool or the sea. The large amount of salt in the water means that no fish live in the lake. This is why it is called the Dead Sea.

The River Jordan flows into the lake. Yet no water flows out. The Dead Sea does not have an outlet to the sea. The water level of the lake has been going down for the last 40 years. Experts say that during this time the Dead Sea has shrunk by roughly 30%. The main reason is that very little water from the River Jordan now flows into it. Israel, Syria and Jordan use the river for irrigation, or watering crops, and as a supply of drinking water.

The Red Sea to Dead Sea project was first discussed around 20 years ago. Yet there have been arguments about what it should do and who would pay for it. The agreement states that a large plant will be built at Aqaba, in Jordan. This city is on the Red Sea. The plant will turn seawater into drinking water. This process is called desalination.

Getting fresh water from seawater produces a lot of brine. This is water that is much saltier than the sea. Normally, desalination plants pump brine back into the sea. As part of the project a pipeline will be built from Aqaba to the Dead Sea. This will be 177 kilometres (110 miles) long. After being pumped along the

pipeline, brine from the desalination plant will flow into the Dead Sea.

Both Israel and Jordan will use drinking water from the desalination plant. Israel has agreed to supply extra drinking water to the West Bank and Amman, the capital of Jordan. This water will come from a freshwater lake called the Sea of Galilee. The River Jordan connects this lake to the Dead Sea.



Dead Sea

Not everyone is happy about the new project. Some environmentalists worry that the brine from the plant at Aqaba could change the [ecology](#) of the Dead Sea. Yet people who are part of the project say care will be taken to make sure this does not happen. ■

AGGRESSIVE MIMICRY

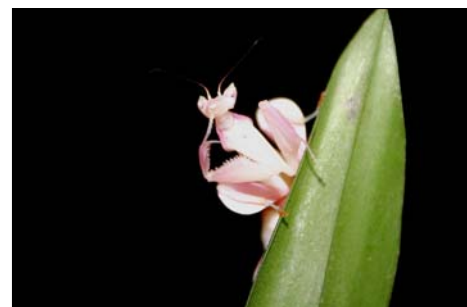
The orchid mantis is a rare insect. It is able to make itself look like a flower. For over 100 years scientists have suspected that this type of mantis does this to catch other insects. A group of researchers recently travelled to Malaysia to find out if this was true.

There are many types of mantis. These insects often have very good [camouflage](#). Their different colours make them difficult to see. The insects have similar colours to their habitats, or the places where they live. It is not unusual for certain types of insects to hide in this way.

Another example is the stick insect. Also known as stick bugs, they are found in many parts of the world. They are very difficult to spot, as when they stay still they look just like small sticks, or twigs.

There are many insects that are able to copy, or mimic, their surroundings. They usually do this for one of two reasons. One reason is that it helps them to hide from other creatures that hunt and kill, or prey on, them. The other is so the insects on which they feed cannot see them. When their prey gets close, the insects can [ambush](#) or suddenly grab them.

Orchid mantises have four walking legs, which look like flower petals. They also have a pair of front legs. These are usually folded up. They use their front legs to grab and catch their prey. Orchid mantises feed on other insects including butterflies. They are able to stay very still while making themselves look like an orchid flower.



Orchid Mantis

Other types of insects will hide in flowers. They do this because the insects they feed on are attracted to flowers. The ones hiding in the flowers catch the insects that land on them. So it is the flowers and not the insects that attract the insects' prey. The orchid mantis is different. It can sit on a leaf and make itself look like a separate orchid flower. Flying insects are attracted to the flower-like mantis. The mantis is therefore attracting its prey by

looking like a flower. This type of behaviour, which is known as 'aggressive mimicry', is unusual.

In Malaysia, the group of researchers managed to find some orchid mantises. They discovered that the insects' colours matched 13 different types of wild flowers. The researchers watched as insects flew close to the flower-like orchid mantises. Each time, if the flying insect was close enough, the mantises grabbed it. This was the first time orchid mantises had been seen catching their prey.

The researchers were surprised. They said the orchid mantis seemed to attract more insects than real flowers do. What's more they are very good at catching the ones that get too close. ■

PRIME MINISTER IN LATVIA RESIGNS

At the end of November Valdis Dombrovskis, the prime minister of Latvia, announced that he had decided to resign, or step down. He said that he was unable to lead the country. This, he explained, was because many people were angry about a recent accident.



Supermarket in Riga after roof collapse

The accident happened at a supermarket in Riga, the capital city. Without warning part of the roof of the supermarket collapsed. Rescue workers rushed to the building. Another part

of the roof fell in while the rescue teams tried to free those who were trapped. Fifty-four people, including three rescue workers, were killed. Another 30 were badly injured.



Valdis Dombrovskis

Latvia is one of three small European countries that are often called the Baltic States. The other two are Estonia and Lithuania. All three were occupied by Russia in 1945, at the end of the Second World War. They then became part of the Russian-led Soviet Union. From 1945 until 1991 the communist leaders in charge of Russia controlled the Baltic States. All three became independent countries in 1991. This was soon after the Soviet Union began to break up.

After becoming independent, Latvians were able to elect their own leaders. The country's parliament, known as the Saeima, has 100 seats. Elections are held every four years. Usually the leader of the party with the most seats in the Saeima becomes the prime minister. Latvia also has a president, who is elected by the members of parliament. The president is head of state but has few powers. The prime minister makes most of the important decisions.

Mr Dombrovskis became prime minister in 2009. Five years earlier Latvia joined the European Union (EU). The country has had many economic problems. They began in 2008. The banks had difficulties

and many companies were forced to close. The number of people without jobs increased. Latvia had to ask the European Union (EU) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for help.

Most people think Mr Dombrovskis has been a good prime minister. He has solved many of the country's economic problems. Latvia now has one of the EU's fastest growing economies. At the beginning of next year it will start to use the euro as its currency. Mr Dombrovskis greatly reduced, or cut, government spending. This was done to save money.

One of the government organisations Mr Dombrovskis cut, or closed down, was in charge of new building work. The supermarket where the accident happened was built in 2011. Some people believe it was badly constructed. Many blame the disaster on the closure of this organisation. This is because its job was to check new buildings. They say the organisation would have made sure the supermarket was constructed correctly. The roof collapse was the worst accident in Latvia since it became an independent country.

As Mr Dombrovskis has resigned, the president will now have to select a new prime minister. The next election for the Latvian parliament will be held in about ten months' time. ■

EAST CHINA SEA ADIZs

On 3rd December the government of South Korea declared that it had extended part of its Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ). The announcement followed a similar one made by China at the end of November. Then, China suddenly said its East China Sea ADIZ had been extended. China's announcement

angered the governments of South Korea and Japan.

Many countries have their own ADIZs. These are part of their airspace. The zones can be over both land and sea. Aircraft that want to fly through them are supposed to let the country know when they plan to do this. This includes passenger planes. Countries are then able to identify any aircraft in their airspace. If there are unidentified planes in its ADIZ a country might think it is about to be attacked. If this happens it is not unusual for fighter jets to quickly take off and fly close to the unidentified aircraft.

China's extended East China Sea ADIZ overlaps a large area of Japan's airspace. South Korea's ADIZ extension means it overlaps an area of Chinese and Japanese airspace. Most people believe that China enlarged its ADIZ because of a disagreement with Japan. In recent months the two countries have been arguing about a group of small islands in the East China Sea.

The group of islands are quite close to China and near Taiwan. They are a long way from Japan's main islands. However, the island group is not too far from Okinawa. This is one of Japan's most southern islands. The Japanese call the group of islands the Senkaku Islands. In China they are known as Diaoyu. People call them Tiaoyutai in Taiwan. All three countries insist that they belong to them.

No one lives on the islands. Some people even describe them as eight large rocks. Yet they are important. Whichever country controls the islands also owns a large area of the surrounding seas. These waters contain many fish. There may also be large supplies of oil and gas under the seabed close by.

The new South Korean ADIZ includes the Socotra Rock. (In South Korea this rock is called *leodo*.) This is not an island but a large **submerged** rock. It is only 4.6 metres (15 feet) below sea level. In the past China and South Korea have argued about who owns this underwater rock.



The USA has agreements, or treaties, with Japan and South Korea. It also has military air bases in both countries. If either of these countries were ever attacked the agreement says that the USA would support them.

Soon after China said that it had enlarged its ADIZ two large American air force planes deliberately flew into it. They did this without any warning. The two bombers, called B52s, flew through the ADIZ for just over two hours. The pilots reported that no Chinese jet fighters had flown close to them. Chinese officials said that they had monitored the American planes.

Both Japan and South Korea have ordered their airline companies to ignore the new Chinese ADIZ. This means the companies should not tell Chinese officials when their passenger planes would be flying through the zone. Yet the government of the USA has said that American airline companies should not ignore it.

Joe Biden, the American vice president, visited Japan on 3rd December. Over the next five days he also travelled to South Korea and Beijing, the capital of China. He spoke with the leader of each country. Mr Biden fears that the overlapping ADIZs might cause an accident. A military aircraft firing at an unidentified passenger plane by mistake is an example. ■

HUMAN EVOLUTION QUESTION

Scientists in Germany have managed to **extract** ancient DNA from a leg bone. The bone, which was found in a cave in Spain, is hundreds of thousands of years old. The scientists expected to discover that it was from an early Neanderthal, a type of ancient human. Yet their DNA study gave an unexpected result.



Scientists working in The Pit of Bones

Most researchers think groups of early humans, or hominids, left Africa about 400,000 years ago. They moved into the Middle East. It's thought that these early humans split into two different types roughly 300,000 years ago. They are called Neanderthals and Denisovans. The places where ancient bones have been found suggest that the hominids moved in different directions. The Neanderthals moved west into Europe and the Denisovans went east.

The name Neanderthal comes from an area in Germany. This is

where some of the first Neanderthal bones were found over 150 years ago. The Denisovans were only discovered within the last few years. DNA was extracted from an ancient finger bone and some teeth. It showed that they came from a hominid that was different from Neanderthals. The bone and teeth are 80,000 years old. They were found in a cave called Denisova, in eastern Russia.



Ancient hominid skull from The Pit of Bones

Homo sapiens, or modern humans, are also believed to have come from Africa. Groups are thought to have begun moving into the Middle East and other parts of the world between 70,000 and 60,000 years ago.

Recent DNA studies have shown that *Homo sapiens* interbred with both Neanderthals and Denisovans. Yet by about 30,000 years ago both these groups had died out. It is not known why. Some researchers suspect it may have had something to do with climate change or that they were unable to compete for food with modern humans.

The cave in Spain where the ancient leg bone was found is called *Sima de los Huesos* (The Pit of Bones). This pit-like cave is 13 metres (43 feet) deep. The bones of 28 ancient hominids have been found at the bottom of the cave. Some researchers believe the bodies were

thrown into the cave as a type of burial. Others think floods washed them into it.

The DNA tests show the leg bone is around 400,000 years old. Before this the earliest ancient human DNA ever taken came from bones that date back only 100,000 years. Normally DNA can only be extracted from very old bones when they have been frozen. It's thought that the cool air in the cave helped to preserve the leg bone DNA.

The scientists were surprised to find that the DNA was more like Denisovans than Neanderthals. So far the only known Denisovan bones were discovered 6,440 kilometres (4,000 miles) away in the eastern part of Russia. No Denisovans bones have ever been found in Spain or other parts of Europe.

The scientists say their discovery suggests that some theories about human evolution may be wrong. The DNA results, they explain, mean the story of human evolution is probably more complicated than previously thought. ■

UKRAINE AND THE EU

Viktor Yanukovich, the president of Ukraine, took part in a number of discussions on 10th December. The day before and the two previous weekends there had been huge street protests in Kiev, the country's capital city. Mr Yanukovich said that he wanted to find a way of ending the demonstrations.

The protesters are angry about a proposed agreement between Ukraine and the European Union (EU). The agreement was to be signed at the end of November. It would make it easier for Ukraine and the EU's 28 member countries

to trade and work with each other. A few days before meeting with EU officials to finalise the agreement, Mr Yanukovich suddenly announced that he would not sign it.



Euromaidan demonstration in Kiev

Mr Yanukovich explained that Ukraine needed to work with Russia. For many years Ukraine was part of the Russian-led Soviet Union. It became an independent country in 1991. This was when the Soviet Union began to break up. However, Ukraine still relies on Russia for many things. Most of the oil and gas the country needs comes from Russian companies. Ukraine grows large amounts of wheat. Russia buys much of it. The ancestors of many people who live in eastern Ukraine came from Russia.

Ukraine has two main political groups. Mr Yanukovich leads one. Many of his supporters live in eastern Ukraine. Most are pro-Russia. The other political group's supporters mainly come from western Ukraine. They are anti-Russia. These are the people who have been demonstrating. They want Ukraine to work more with Europe and less with Russia. The protesters also accuse Mr Yanukovich's government of being dishonest and corrupt.

The demonstrators believe that Russia's leaders told Mr Yanukovich not to sign the EU agreement. Vladimir Putin, the Russian president, insists this is not true. However, Russia wants Ukraine to join

NewsCAST

BUILDING PUZZLE — Rubik's Cubes are the world's best-selling puzzle game. The cubes have six sides. Six different coloured square stickers cover each one. A person needs to keep turning the lines, or rows, of the cube. The puzzle is complete when the stickers on each side are all the same colour. A Spanish designer has turned a building in Austria into a giant Rubik's Cube. Instead of coloured stickers the building is covered in large square shaped lights. They change colour when rows of a real Rubik's Cube (connected to a computer) are moved. People trying to solve the giant cube say it's difficult. This is because only two sides of the building can be seen at one time.

its own trading area, or zone. This is called the **Customs** Union. Belarus and Kazakhstan are in this trading zone. Both are former members of the Soviet Union.

Over 500,000 people have taken part in some of the Kiev protests. There have also been smaller demonstrations in other cities. The protesters call the demonstrations 'Euro-maidan'. *Maidan Nezalezhnosti* is a large open area, or square, in the centre of Kiev. (*Nezalezhnosti* means independence and *maidan* is a square.) During the demonstrations some protesters managed to enter several government buildings. The police have made many arrests. They have also tried to break up some of the protests.

On 8th December some protesters toppled, or pushed over, a statue of Lenin. Soon after the Russian Revolution in 1917 Vladimir Lenin (1870 – 1924) became Russia's first communist leader. Many Soviet Union member countries had statues of

Lenin in their larger cities. Yet after they became independent nations most removed them. People said the statues reminded them of being under communist control.

Mr Yanukovych met with Catherine Ashton, or Baroness Ashton. She is the EU's head of foreign affairs. He also took part in a discussion with three former presidents of Ukraine. Their talks were shown on television. Afterwards Mr Yanukovych said government officials would visit the EU's headquarters in Brussels, Belgium's capital city. There they would take part in more talks about the EU agreement. ■

COPENHAGEN WHEEL

A new type of bicycle wheel is now being sold in the USA. Called the Copenhagen Wheel it is able to store kinetic energy. This energy is then used to help the cyclist go uphill or go faster. Kinetic energy is the energy of motion. All moving objects have kinetic energy. The energy stored by the new wheel comes from pedalling, braking and going downhill.

The person who invented the wheel works at a university in the USA. Several years ago the mayor of Copenhagen asked him to try to solve a problem. Copenhagen is the capital city of Denmark. It is also where the name of the wheel comes from. The mayor wanted more people to ride bicycles in his city.

The inventor did some research. He found that many people liked to ride bikes but they didn't want to cycle to work. The main reason was that they don't want to arrive hot and **perspiring**.

Nowadays, in some countries such as China, electric bikes are popular. These have an electric motor and a

number of controls. Electric bikes can also be pedalled. Most are quite heavy. Many people who enjoy riding bicycles do not like them. This is because electric bikes are like small mopeds or motorbikes. The inventor decided that he needed to find a way that gave cyclists 'extra power'.

Copenhagen Wheels are being made in three sizes. They have been designed to replace the rear wheel of normal bicycles. The wheels have a large red disc. Inside the disc are a rechargeable battery and several electronic devices. The wheels have no controls, buttons or wires. Sensors inside the disc track how hard the rider has to pedal. The disc can add extra power, so pedalling becomes easier. The energy the battery generates is about four times more than a person needs to ride a bike.



Copenhagen Wheel (Superpedestrian)

A bicycle fitted with a Copenhagen Wheel will have a top speed of about 32 kilometres (20 miles) per hour. It should be able to travel for 48 kilometres (30 miles) before the battery needs recharging. The battery can last for longer if the rider does a lot of braking and downhill cycling.

The sensors can be adjusted. For example, riders can set times and distances when extra power is needed. These adjustments are made from a smartphone app.

A company called Superpedestrian, which is based in the city of Boston, is selling the new wheels. They cost US\$700 (£430). ■

FRENCH TROOPS IN CAR

Recently there have been reports of serious violence in the Central African Republic (CAR). The reports say that armed groups have killed hundreds of people. On 4th December the United Nations (UN) held a meeting to discuss what was happening in the CAR. It gave permission to French and African Union (AU) troops to use weapons to protect civilians in the country.



François Hollande, president of France

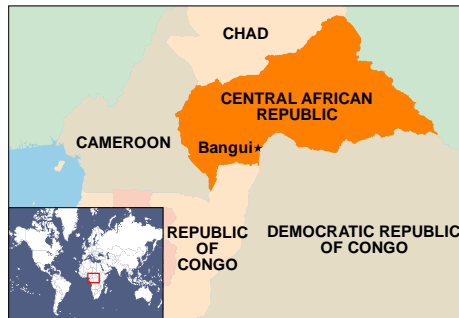
France has kept about 400 troops in the CAR for many months. They are based in Bangui, the capital city. Their job has been to protect the airport and any French people who live in the city. After the UN announcement François Hollande, the president of France, said he had decided to send 1,600 more French troops to the CAR. These troops are based in other North African countries, such as Cameroon.

The CAR, like many other countries in North and West Africa, used to be a colony of France. Even though these countries became independent nations in the early 1960s, France still has military bases in some of them. Last January Mr Hollande sent thousands of troops to Mali. This country is another former French colony. There they helped to defeat several Islamic militant groups. Around 2,800 French troops are still in Mali.

Since it became an independent country the CAR has had many problems. At the end of last year fighting broke out. A group called the Séléka Coalition seized control of some northern areas. In the local language Séléka means 'alliance'. As they approached the capital city, François Bozize, the CAR's president, left the country.

Eventually Michel Djotodia took over. He was the leader of Séléka. He wanted the groups that had been fighting for the Séléka Coalition to give up their weapons. Yet most refused to do so. These groups have now been attacking towns and cities. Another armed group, which supports Mr Bozize, recently attacked Bangui.

Many of these armed groups are Muslims. Now fighting seems to have broken out between Islamic and Christian groups. Around 10% of the population, or 400,000 people, have left their homes to get away from the fighting.



There have been around 2,500 soldiers from different African countries in the CAR for over a year. These soldiers are part of an AU peacekeeping force. After the UN vote the AU said it too would send more troops to the CAR. After they arrived some of the French and AU troops moved to other parts of the country to protect local people.

On 9th December two French soldiers were shot and killed near

the airport in Bangui. The governments of the USA and the UK said they would send some large military transport planes. These will be used to fly more AU soldiers from other African countries to the CAR.

Ban Ki-moon is the secretary-general, or leader, of the UN. He says that he is worried about what is happening in the CAR. Mr Ban hopes that the UN will eventually be able to set up a much larger peace-keeping operation in the country. ■

WILDEBEEST EARLY MIGRATION

Wildlife officials in Kenya have said that tens of thousands of wildebeest have begun returning from Tanzania. Their early return to Kenya is unusual. The officials say they have never seen it happen at this time of year before.

Wildebeest are also called gnus. In the Dutch language wildebeest means 'wild beast' or 'wild cattle'. An adult wildebeest is about 1.4 metres (4.5 feet) tall at the shoulder. They can weigh as much as 272 kilograms (600 pounds). The animals have short, sharp curved horns.

Wildebeest are only found in the southern and eastern parts of Africa. Their habitats, or places where they live, are grassy plains and areas of open woodland. The animals live in very large herds. Wildebeest are active during the day and night. They spend much of their time eating grass.

In Tanzania and Kenya the animals are famous for their migration. Each year, wildebeest move northwards from the Serengeti National Park, in Tanzania, to the Maasai Mara Game Reserve, in Kenya. This migration normally happens in May or June.

Usually the migrating herds are made up of at least 1.5 million

wildebeest. Often other animals, such as zebra and gazelles, travel alongside them. Some people describe this annual migration as one of the most unforgettable sights in the world. Many visitors travel to this part of Africa to watch it.



Herd of wildebeest

Other animals hunt and kill, or prey on, wildebeest. These include lions, cheetahs, hyenas, and wild dogs. This is probably why wildebeest travel in such big herds. Animals that feed on them find it easier to catch and kill wildebeest if they are on their own and not part of a herd. During their migration wildebeest have to cross the River Mara. This river is home to many crocodiles. They too prey on wildebeest.

The weather explains why wildebeest travel between the Serengeti and the Maasai Mara. The two places have different amounts of rain. It also rains at different times of the year. When it rains the grass grows quickly and it is much greener. The animals therefore move from one place to the other for the better grass.

Wildebeest usually move from Kenya to Tanzania in September. They then stay in Tanzania until April before going back to Kenya. During this time the females give birth to hundreds of thousands of calves. The calves only take a few minutes to learn to walk. After several days they can run with the herd.

Officials in Kenya say that many of the returning wildebeest look very

thin. A lack of rain in Tanzania this year may mean there is not enough grass for them. The officials say this probably explains why the animals have started returning to Kenya four months early. ■

WORLD'S BIGGEST FLOATING PLATFORM

On 4th December a shipbuilding company in South Korea launched the hull of Prelude FLNG. A hull is the main part, or body, of a ship. Some people have described the hull as the world's biggest vessel, or large boat. But it's really part of a huge floating platform. FLNG stands for Floating Liquefied Natural Gas.

Prelude is being built for the Royal Dutch Shell Company. This company, which is based in both the Netherlands and the UK, is one of the largest oil and gas companies in the world. Prelude's hull is 488 metres (1,600 feet) long and 74 metres (243 feet) wide. When finished it will be as tall as a 60-storey building. The construction work is expected to cost about US\$12 billion (£7.3 billion).



Artist's impression of Prelude FLNG

When finished, other ships will tow, or pull, the floating platform to Australia. There it will be moored or 'parked' about 200 kilometres (124 miles) off the country's western coast. The platform is expected to

stay in the same place for about 25 years. It has been designed to withstand the most powerful storms, or cyclones. Royal Dutch Shell hopes that the operation to move the platform will have been completed by 2017. It will then start to pump up natural gas from large gas fields deep below the seabed.

Like oil, natural gas is a fossil fuel. Many countries burn it in power stations to make electricity. It is also used for cooking and heating. However, the gas is not as easy to transport as oil. This is because it takes up more space. Currently most gas is moved from the place where it's found to where it's needed through very long pipelines.

Two of the biggest producers of LNG are Qatar and Indonesia. Chilling the gas to very low temperatures turns it into a liquid. The liquid gas, or LNG, can then be loaded into tanker-like ships. This means it can be transported around the world in the same way as oil.

Royal Dutch Shell says that transporting gas from the undersea gas fields through pipelines would be too difficult. It would also be very expensive. Prelude FLNG has therefore been specially designed. It will be able to extract the gas from under the seabed and turn it into LNG. Ships will then be able to come alongside it. After being filled the ships will take the LNG to other countries.

Several international companies are now planning to get oil and gas from places that many people thought were inaccessible. Prelude FLNG is an example of this.

The price of oil and gas continues to go up. This is mainly because countries such as China and India are using more. In these places gas is used in factories and burnt to make electricity. In future, much

of Prelude's LNG will probably be sold to China.

Royal Dutch Shell says it is already planning to build another floating gas platform. This one will be even larger than Prelude. ■

DEMONSTRATIONS IN THAILAND

Yingluck Shinawatra, the prime minister of Thailand, announced the dissolution of the country's House of Representatives on 9th December. The House of Representatives is Thailand's lower house of parliament. Dissolution means the parliament will close and a new election will be held.



Anti-government demonstrators in Thailand

Ms Yingluck's announcement came after large anti-government protests. These demonstrations first began at the beginning of November. The protesters tried to enter several government buildings in Bangkok, the capital city. At first the police set up barriers to stop this from happening. Yet on 3rd December the police took them down. The protesters could then enter the buildings if they wished to.

The King of Thailand's birthday was two days later. It's thought that the police removed the barriers so there would not be any trouble on this day. The king's birthday is a national holiday. Usually tens of thousands of people take part in celebrations, which are held in larger towns and cities.

King Bhumibol is the world's longest reigning monarch. The king is admired by nearly everyone in Thailand. He is very popular and held in great respect. King Bhumibol has ruled Thailand for 67 years. However, recently he has not been well. For the last few years he has often stayed in a hospital. There a special medical team looks after him.

Thailand is a constitutional monarchy. This means the king is the head of the country, but he does not govern it. The country's elected prime minister and his or her government make all the important decisions.

Ms Yingluck is Thailand's first woman prime minister. She is the leader of the Pheu Thai Party (PTP). Her party got most of the seats in the lower house of parliament at the last election. This was held in 2011.

Ms Yingluck is the youngest sister of Thaksin Shinawatra, a former prime minister. He led the country from 2001 to 2006. Then he was deposed by the military. When the military takes over a country in this way it is known as a coup d'état, or coup (pronounced 'coo'). Since Thailand first became a democracy in 1932 there have been nearly 20 attempted or successful military coups.

After Mr Thaksin was deposed he left Thailand. The military ran the country for about a year. It then arranged for new elections to be held. Mr Thaksin now lives in exile, in Dubai. In the meantime he has been convicted of corruption, or dishonesty, by a court in Thailand.

Before Mr Thaksin became prime minister he was a very wealthy businessman. Political parties that were supported by wealthy people and the military nearly always ran Thailand. Mr Thaksin changed this. He set up a new political party. He said

his party would help poorer people, especially in rural areas in the north of the country.

The anti-government protesters dislike Mr Thaksin. They accuse him of making the political system in Thailand corrupt. The leaders of the protests claim he is still running the country. They think he gives orders to his younger sister. The anti-government protesters support the Democrat Party. Yet this party has not won an election for 13 years. Leaders of the protests claim that Ms Yingluck and her brother give money to people in the countryside so they will vote for them.

The protest leaders were demanding that the House of Representatives be closed. On the day before the dissolution announcement, Democrat Party members of parliament walked out.



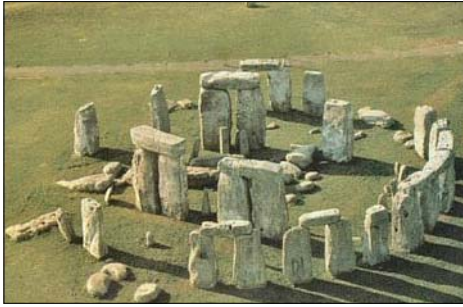
Yingluck Shinawatra

The protest leaders do not want another election. Most people think this is because they know the Democrat Party cannot win. Leaders of the protests say Ms Yingluck should leave Thailand. They want a senior group of people to be appointed. This unelected group would then govern the country.

Ms Yingluck is unlikely to agree to the protesters' demands. Many people therefore expect the demonstrations to continue. The new election will be held at the beginning of February. ■

ROCK MUSIC THEORY

Two researchers have recently explained their new idea, or theory, about Stonehenge. They believe they may have discovered why certain stones were used to build part of the ancient monument. Called bluestones, the researchers think the stones were used because they make musical sounds.



Stonehenge

Archaeologists have always been puzzled about the bluestones at Stonehenge. This is because they probably came from a place over 385 kilometres (240 miles) away. It's not known why the people who built Stonehenge wanted to use them. Transporting the stones over such a long distance must have been very difficult.

Stonehenge is in the UK. It is one of the most famous ancient monuments in the world. Archaeologists believe it was built over a long time. They suspect that the site was used for many hundreds of years before any stones were erected, or put up. The whole structure took several hundred years to complete. The first stones were erected around BCE 2,500. This is about the same time that most experts believe the Great Pyramid of Giza, in Egypt, was built.

Stonehenge had a large outer circle of standing stones. This was made from upright stones with lintels, or horizontal stones, on top of them. Inside was a circle of bluestones. These were smaller than the

outer circle of stones. They had no horizontal stones on top.

In the centre of Stonehenge there was a group of much taller stones with lintels. These formed a horseshoe shape. Within this, also in the shape of a horseshoe, was another group of smaller bluestones. The taller stones are called sarsen stones. The stones in the outer circle are also sarsen stones. These stones probably came from a [quarry](#) about 40 kilometres (25 miles) away. It's thought that the bluestones were the first to be erected.

Many people think that Stonehenge is one of the 'wonders of the ancient world'. There are many ideas, or theories, about how and why it was built.

A few people think it was a place where animals or even humans were [sacrificed](#). Others say the monument was where a person's body was taken after they died. Their bodies were then burnt, or cremated. Another idea is that people travelled to Stonehenge if they were ill or had something wrong with them.



How Stonehenge may have looked

However, most people suspect that Stonehenge was used as a type of 'calendar'. Some of the stones line up with the places on the [horizon](#) where the Sun rises on Midsummer's Day and sets at midwinter. The stone circle could therefore have been a way of tracking how the Sun appears to travel across the sky during different seasons.

The researchers went to the place where the bluestones are thought to have come from. There they hit the stones with hammers. The researchers discovered that certain stones made different sounds. For example, some made a sound a bit like a bell, others were similar to a small drum and several produced deep gong-like noises.

Archaeologists think that Stonehenge used to have about 80 bluestones. Around half remain. Each weighs between two and four tonnes. The researchers got permission to test some of them. When these bluestones were struck they made musical sounds. When hit the sarsen stones do not make these noises.

The sounds the bluestones made could be heard from far away. The researchers suspect the stones were played like a huge musical instrument. If so the bluestones must have been special. This might help to explain why they were transported from so far away. ■

DESTROYING SYRIA'S CHEMICAL WEAPONS

Last September the USA and Russia agreed on a plan to remove all of Syria's chemical weapons. They would then be taken to another country and destroyed. However, no country has offered to do this. All the weapons are supposed to be destroyed by the middle of next year.

Military officials in the USA say that changes, or modifications, are now being made to an American navy cargo ship. The ship is called the MV Cape Ray (MV stands for motor vessel). The modifications mean the weapons will now be destroyed on the ship.

Fighting began in Syria over two and a half years ago. It started after the government ordered the army to use weapons to stop street protests in several towns. The demonstrators were complaining about the country's president, Bashar al-Assad, his government and the police force. Mr al-Assad and his family have controlled Syria for over 40 years.

At least 100,000 people have been killed in the war. Millions of Syrians have moved to Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, and Iraq to get away from the fighting. Most of these people are now living in refugee camps.

The war is being fought by the Syrian army and a number of rebel opposition groups. Not all the rebel groups work with each other. However, all oppose Mr al-Assad and his government. Yet many people in Syria support the Syrian government and its army. Like Mr al-Assad

they say the rebels are terrorists who want to destroy their country.

Traditionally Russia has supported Mr al-Assad and his family. Several Arab nations, such as Qatar and Saudi Arabia, have been giving the rebels weapons and money. Since the war began other countries, including the USA, the UK and France, have declared that they want the rebels to win. Russian leaders say helping the rebels will make the problem worse.

Before the war began it was known that Syria had chemical weapons. These include highly poisonous, or toxic, gases, which are very dangerous. They can kill thousands of people very quickly. The toxic gases can be put inside artillery shells or rockets. They can also be dropped from planes and fitted to both short- and long-range missiles. Using chemical weapons is against international law.

At the end of August a chemical attack took place. It happened in a part of Damascus, Syria's capital city. Then, the rebels controlled this part of the city. Some say at least 1,400 people died. Many were women and children. Soon afterwards the leaders of the USA and France declared that they might attack several Syrian army bases. This, they said, would be a punishment for using chemical weapons.

Working with Russia, Syria agreed that all of its chemical weapons should be destroyed. Inspectors from an organisation called the OPCW (Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons) went to Syria. The inspectors now know where all these weapons are being stored. They have also deliberately damaged certain factories. This is so more chemical weapons cannot be made.



The plan was for the chemical weapons to be taken to another country to be destroyed. But no countries have said they would be willing to do this. Albania is one of the few countries that has the right type of equipment. However, most people in Albania did not want the weapons to be taken to their country. Thousands took part in demonstrations. The prime minister of Albania, Edi Rama, said his country would refuse to accept them.



MV Cape Ray

The MV Cape Ray will be fitted with special equipment. Using other chemicals and water, the poisons in the weapons will be turned into a harmless liquid. American military officials say that none of this liquid will be dumped, or tipped into, the sea. The ship is expected to collect the weapons from Syria within the next few months. ■

Development). This organisation was set up over 60 years ago. It has 34 member countries. The OECD's headquarters are in Paris, the capital of France. Its members meet to discuss and find solutions to problems, which can occur in democratic countries. The organisation also carries out surveys and studies.

The first PISA tests were in 2000. Since then they have been completed every three years. The most recent tests were done last year. Around 500,000 15-year-old students did tests in maths, science and reading. The 2012 PISA tests had an **emphasis** on maths. The tests are done on paper and last for about two hours.

Students from schools in 65 different countries took the tests. The schools were in countries in Europe, North and South America, Asia, and Australia. Tunisia was the only country in Africa that was included. In China only schools in three cities, Shanghai, Hong Kong and Macau, did the tests. When the next PISA tests are done in 2015 schools throughout China will take part.

In the science and reading tests Shanghai and Hong Kong came first and second. In the maths test Shanghai came top and Hong Kong third.

Singapore, a city-state in Asia, came second. Other Asian nations also did very well. In maths Taiwan, South Korea, Macau, and Japan were all in the top seven. At number eight, Liechtenstein was the highest ranked European country for maths. The UK came 26th and the USA 36th. The countries at the bottom for maths were Qatar, Indonesia and Peru.

Experts believe PISA maths tests show that Asian students are several years ahead of students in other parts of the world.

As part of the tests the amount of money governments spend on each student is recorded. In some countries this amount does not seem to make much difference. For example, much less money is spent on students in Vietnam than in many other countries. Yet in the maths tests Vietnam, another Asian country, came 17th.

Many governments make use of PISA results. Some use them as a way of deciding if their country's schools and ways of teaching need to change.

However, not everyone agrees with PISA tests. For instance, some teachers argue that Asian students spend too much time learning how

PISA TESTS

The results of the most recent PISA tests were announced on 3rd December. PISA stands for Programme for International Student **Assessment**. The tests are meant to measure how well students are doing at school in different countries and cities. The best performing students were from Asian countries.

PISA tests are done by an organisation called the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and

PISA test results 2012

MATHS	SCIENCES	READING
1 Shanghai, China	Shanghai, China	Shanghai, China
2 Singapore	Hong Kong, China	Hong Kong, China
3 Hong Kong, China	Singapore	Singapore
4 Taiwan	Japan	Japan
5 South Korea	Finland	South Korea
6 Macau, China	Estonia	Finland
7 Japan	South Korea	Taiwan
8 Liechtenstein	Vietnam	Canada
9 Switzerland	Poland	Ireland
10 Netherlands	Liechtenstein	Poland

Source: OECD

to answer test questions. This, they say, means students are not taught how subjects can be used when they leave school.



Classroom in China

Many Asian students spend more hours studying each day than students do in other parts of the world. Students in Chinese cities and countries like South Korea often go to extra classes in the evenings. This is known as ‘cramming’. In schools in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Macau, students spend nearly all their time studying maths, science, Chinese and English. Much less time is spent learning other subjects. ■

CANADA’S ARCTIC CLAIM

Government officials from Canada sent an application to the United Nations (UN) on 6th December. The application was to register Canada’s claim that it owns large parts of the Arctic and Atlantic Oceans. The Arctic Ocean area includes the North Pole.

However, other countries also claim that this part of the Arctic Ocean belongs to them. Countries with Arctic regions include Russia, Finland, Denmark, Norway, Canada, and the USA. Denmark is an Arctic nation, as Greenland is one of its territories.

The UN has an international rule. It’s called the Convention on the Law of the Sea. The law states that countries own the seabed within 370 kilometres (230 miles or 200

nautical miles) of their coastlines. It also says they own the continental shelves that are connected to, or extend from, their coasts. These are areas where the sea is shallower. During ice ages, thousands of years ago, continental shelves were dry land. Some are narrow. Yet others extend from coastlines for hundreds of kilometres.

In the past Russia has also said that it owns the area of sea and ice around the North Pole. In 2007, Russia sent a submarine under the ice to try to find out if Russia’s continental shelf extended far out into the Arctic Sea. The submariners placed a Russian flag made of metal on the seabed at the North Pole. This annoyed Canada, the USA, and Denmark.



In the past Arctic nations have not always been interested in what happened in the Arctic Ocean. However, this has changed in recent years. Rising world temperatures have meant the Arctic sea ice has been shrinking. Now, during the summer months, ships are able to travel along Arctic routes to the north of Canada and Russia. Before, these were blocked by ice throughout the year.

It’s now known that there are valuable resources under the Arctic

seabed. These include oil and gas. Some studies have shown that roughly 15% of the oil and 30% of the gas in the world, which is yet to be discovered, is under the Arctic Ocean. If these oil and gas fields are found it will be necessary to decide which country owns them.

Near the North Pole there is a shallow area of sea. It is called the Lomonosov Ridge. This ridge is like an undersea chain, or range, of mountains. Both Canada and Russia want to prove that the Lomonosov Ridge joins their continental shelves. If it does they may legally own the surrounding area. The Canadian application claims that the ridge is connected to Ellesmere Island. This is the most northerly part of Canada.

Both Canada and Russia plan to do a lot more scientific work in the Arctic. This includes creating accurate maps of the sea floor. As much of the ocean is covered in ice this will be difficult. Some predict that it will take both countries at least five years to do this. Until detailed maps are produced the UN is unlikely to make any decisions about the ownership of the Arctic Ocean seabed. ■

GIANT PREHISTORIC TOILET

Palaeontologists, or scientists who study fossils, say they have recently found large amounts of fossilised dung (or poo) in Argentina. Some people have described the discovery as ‘the world’s largest prehistoric toilet’. The scientists believe that it was created about 240 million years ago.

The prehistoric toilet, or latrine, is much older than anything similar that has been found before. Previously, the earliest known latrine was about 20 million years old.

Humans are not the only creatures that use **communal** latrines. Other mammals are known to act in a similar way. These include lemurs, meerkats and spider monkeys. Large herbivores, or plant-eating animals, such as horses, elephants and rhinos will also use communal latrines.

Humans use communal toilets to stop **sanitation** problems such as the spread of disease. Animals may do it for similar reasons. Their dung can contain harmful bugs, or parasites. The animals know not to drop their dung in the places where they eat. Some animals use communal toilets to mark out their own areas, or territories. So the latrines are like a signal. They warn other animals not to enter the area.

The scientists found several large areas where there were many fossilised lumps of dung (known as coprolites). These areas are about 900 square metres (9,690 square feet) in size. Within each there were around 94 coprolites per square metre. Not all are the same shape and some are different colours.



Fossilised *Dinodontosaurus* skeleton

Scientists can find out many things from coprolites. By breaking them open they can record parts of fossilised ancient plants. It may also be possible to find the remains of parasites that lived in the creatures' stomachs.

Finding fossilised dung is unusual. This is because it can be easily washed away by rain. Dung also

biodegrades, or rots, very quickly. The prehistoric toilet is very well preserved. This was because it was suddenly covered in a thick layer of ash from a nearby volcano.

The scientists know which creature produced all the dung. They found many of their bones nearby. Called *Dinodontosaurus* they were about 2.4 metres (eight feet) long. These plant-eating creatures are thought to have been similar to modern day rhinos.

Dinodontosaurus lived during the Triassic Period, or between 250 and 200 million years ago. This was at the beginning of what many people call the 'Age of the Dinosaurs'. ■

MOON PLANTS

Scientists working at NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) have announced plans for a new experiment. Seedlings, or seeds, of three types of plants will be put in a sealed container, or canister. The canister will be put on the surface of the Moon to see if the plants grow.

The scientists want to find out if humans can live and work on the Moon. From previous space flights it's known that humans can visit the Moon. Yet it is not known if people could safely stay on the Moon, or on other planets such as Mars, for many months or years.

The Moon has no atmosphere. So it is not shielded, or protected, from radiation from the Sun. Like humans the seeds of plants carry genetic material. This can be damaged by radiation. Gravity on the Moon is much less than it is on the Earth. So the experiment will test what effect the radiation and reduced gravity has on plants.

Like humans, plants need food, water and air to survive. On the Earth plants must be able to get the chemicals they need to grow and be healthy. They do not 'eat' like animals. Instead, they make their own food by a process called photosynthesis. To do this, they need carbon dioxide and water. Plants also need light energy. The plants can turn these substances into starches and sugars. These are stored in the plant and used when needed.



Basil plants

Plants get carbon dioxide from the air around them. Carbon dioxide enters plants through tiny holes in their leaves. Water comes from the soil in which plants grow. Their roots absorb it. The light energy plants use comes from sunlight. For healthy growth plants also need some **nutrients**. Two of the most important are chemicals called potassium and nitrogen. As these dissolve in water in the soil the plants' roots absorb them.

The canister containing the seeds will be specially designed. The plants will get carbon dioxide from the air inside it. A type of filter paper will be used instead of soil. This will contain the nutrients the plants need. Soon after the canister lands on the Moon water will be automatically added to the filter paper. The plants will get the light energy from the Sun.

After a few days the seeds should start to grow. The canister will contain

enough carbon dioxide and water for about ten days of growth. During this time the plants will be carefully monitored. The results will be compared with the same plants growing in similar canisters on the Earth.

The three plants used in the experiment will be a type of cress, basil and turnips. Basil is often used in cooking. The first plant-growing test will happen in 2015. Others will follow. The scientists say that if plants can grow in these containers on the Moon then humans might also be able to live there. ■

WORLD TRADE AGREEMENT

The World Trade Organization (WTO) held a large conference, or meeting, between 3rd and 7th December. The meeting took place on the island of Bali, which is part of Indonesia. At the end of the meeting an agreement was signed. This was the first WTO agreement that has ever been signed by all the organisation's members.



WTO conference in Bali

The WTO has 159 member countries. Ministers or senior officials from each country attended the meeting in Bali. The WTO is based in Geneva, in Switzerland. A director-general leads the organisation. The WTO's current leader, Roberto Azevêdo, is from Brazil.

The WTO was set up in 1995. It acts as a referee when countries

argue about trading, or buying and selling things, with each other. It also tries to get its member countries to get rid of subsidies and import tariffs. Some people describe these two things as 'trade barriers'.



For example, some crops and foods are cheaper to grow in poorer countries than in richer ones. If richer countries bought these crops, workers in the poorer ones could earn more money. This would improve their lives. These workers could then buy some of the things made in richer countries. This type of trading, called free trade, is what the WTO wants all its members to do. However, free trade means there are no trade barriers.

One of the main barriers to free trade is subsidies. Some richer countries give money (subsidies) to many of their own farmers. These farmers are therefore paid to grow certain food crops. Often they grow too much. Some of the extra food is then sold cheaply to other countries. This is called 'dumping'. It means food crops (or other items) being sold in other countries for a price that is less than the cost of producing them. When this happens poorer countries may not be able to sell what they grow. This is because the 'dumping' price is even lower than their selling price.

Getting rid of farm subsidies in some countries has been difficult. If there were no subsidies some farms would have to close. In several places, such as France and South Korea, there have been large farmers' protests when governments tried to reduce subsidies.

The other main trade barrier is import tariffs. Some governments put an extra tax, or tariff, on certain things when they are brought into their country. This means people in the country have to pay more to buy them.

Import tariffs are often used to protect workers. For instance, a country might have many people working in shoemaking factories. The country may therefore not want less expensive shoes to be imported from other places. If they are, the country's own shoemaking factories might have to close. This is because people will be less likely to buy their more expensive shoes. If the government puts a tariff on imported shoes it will make them cost more.

Most think that free trade is a good thing. Yet not everyone agrees. These people say that free trade can be a disadvantage for less wealthy countries. They say free trade will just make richer countries even richer.

The WTO agreement that has just been signed has been named the 'Bali Package'. It has not removed all subsidies and import tariffs. Instead the agreement will improve what's known as trade facilitation. This means all countries must now make it quicker and easier to trade with each other. ■

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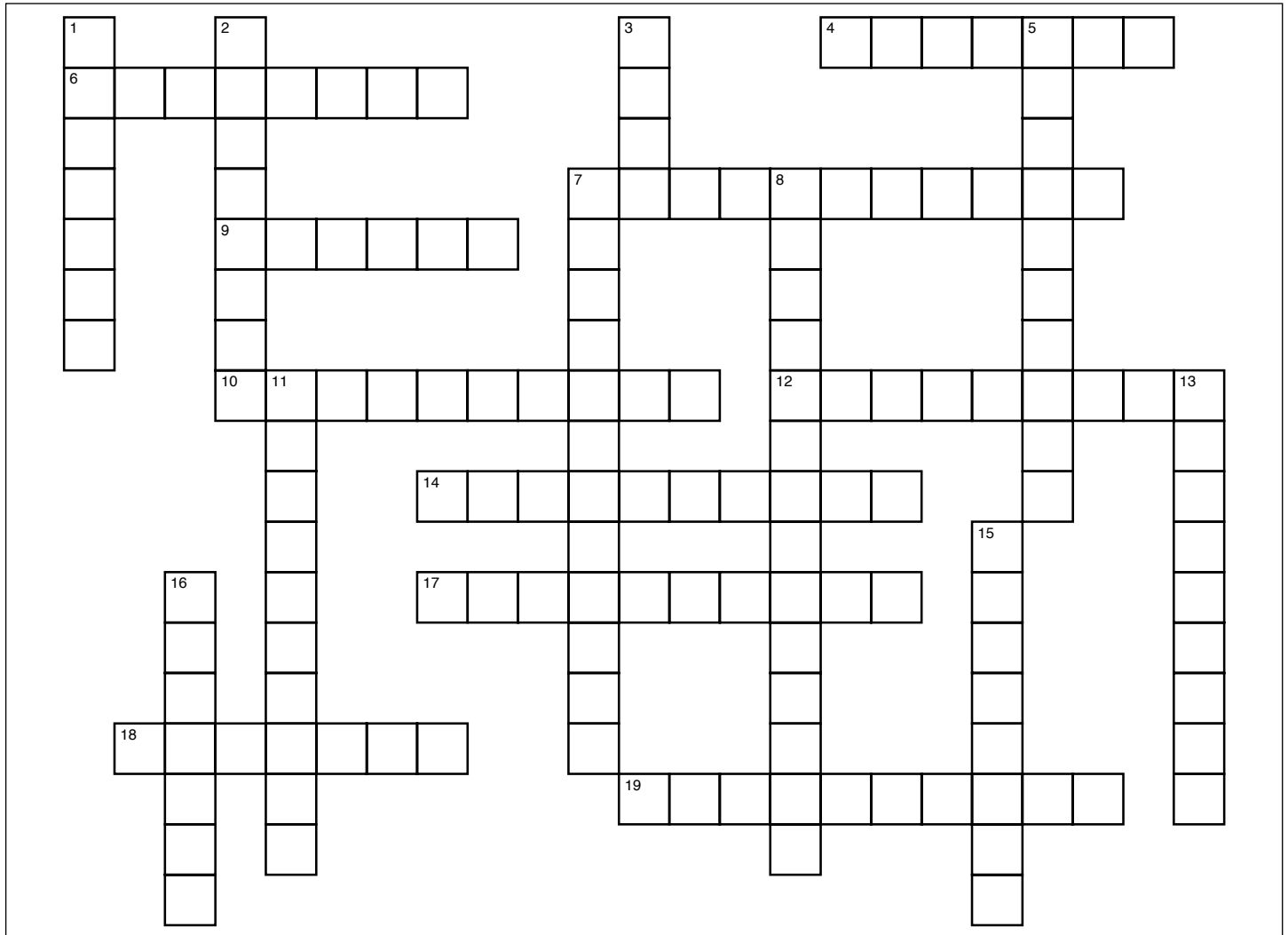
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ISSUE 212

GLOSSARY PUZZLE

INSTRUCTIONS: ① Complete the crossword. The answers are highlighted in orange in the news stories. There are 25 words highlighted and you need 20 of them to complete the crossword. ② Once you have solved the crossword go to the word search on the next page ➡



Across

- 4 Verb** To remove or take something out
6 Adjective Describes something that is used by a group of people or animals
7 Verb Stopped something from happening for a short period
9 Verb To attack suddenly from a place of hiding
10 Verb Killed an animal or person as an offering to a god or gods
12 Noun (Plural) Substances that provide nourishment needed for life and growth
14 Verb Sweating
17 Noun The systems for taking waste products and dirty water away from buildings to protect people's health
18 Noun The act of copying or imitating something
19 Noun Coloured patterns, on skin, fur or clothes, that make an animal, plant or person difficult to see because they blend into the surroundings

Down

- 1 Noun** Relationship between all living things and where they live
2 Noun Special importance
3 Noun A very famous person or thing that people look up to because they represent a set of beliefs or a way of life
5 Noun The act of working out or judging if something is correct
7 Adjective Impossible or very difficult to reach
8 Noun The act of becoming friendly again after fighting or arguing
11 Adjective Displaying forceful, attacking behaviour
13 Noun (Plural) Money given as part of the cost of something
15 Noun The act of deliberately destroying something or damaging it on purpose
16 Noun (Plural) Government taxes on imports or exports

Issue 212

GLOSSARY PUZZLE *CONTINUED*

N O I T A I L I C N O C E R N D S A
 U O X C L V Z S A C R I F I C E D G
 T C I Q O X S T E E B S S P E L T G
 R J T T Y N Z G U K U E D Y C A T R
 I C K R A J A L M B I G Y E J C N E
 E H I X A T Z P S Z P A H P O O A S
 N N Y S O W I I N E R L X M Z V S S
 T K F B A N D N R T D F M P E Y S I
 S G A W K I P S A E O U C C W P E V
 Q S H Y E S P Y T S N O K P W L S E
 B E F S W I R P T A A M T S N M S U
 R K K F R S U X L C C A H Y H Y M E
 M V A I I R O P U E N C I R N O E Q
 G Q N Y R R I E M N D J K C F K N H
 P G Q E F G A L I X R W U I K P T S
 E X T R A C T T H U E M Y M A F E Z
 W N D I Z N Y G O L O C E I J B J P
 I N A C C E S S I B L E A M B U S H

INSTRUCTIONS: ③ Find 19 of the 20 crossword answers in the word search. Words can go vertically, horizontally, diagonally and back to front. ④ After finding the 19 words write down the 20th (or missing) word under the puzzle.

Demics are tokens that Individual and Family Subscribers can earn. They are awarded for answering this Glossary Puzzle and/or the Daily News question – accessible by logged in users – correctly. Demics earned can be used by Family and Individual Subscribers in the Newsademic online store.

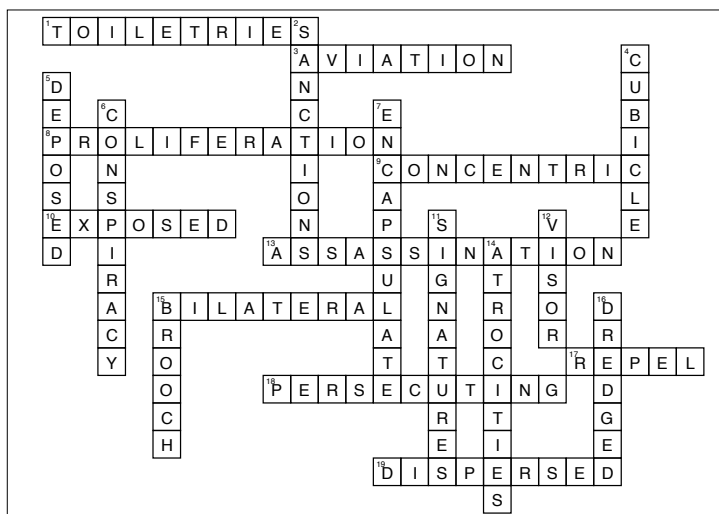


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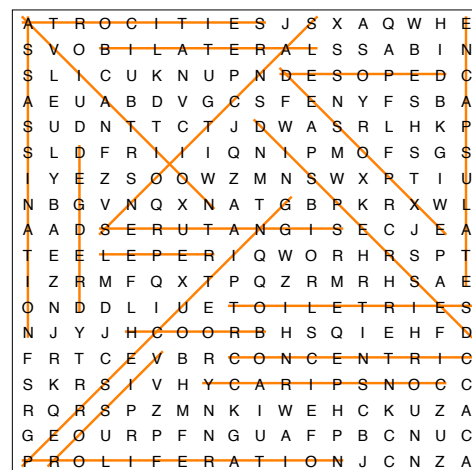
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If you wish to earn additional Demics log in to www.newsademic.com, go to the Prize Competitions area and submit the missing word. Puzzle entries must be submitted by 10 pm on 25th December 2013 (GMT/UTC).*

MISSING WORD ANSWER =



ISSUE 211 ANSWERS



C U B I C L E